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ADDRESS

[No. 183.]

OF THE

UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA,

TO THE

CITIZENS OF PENNSYLVANIA,

WITH THE

PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS,

Adopted in General Meeting, August 26th, 1868.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:

Again you are called to the polls to defend the cause for which, since 1860, you have shown your devotion in so many sacrifices.

You doubtless thought, when the rebels laid down their arms and acknowledged themselves vanquished, that the struggle was over, and that all for which you had fought was secured. You may ask yourselves why, three years after a triumph so complete, your exertions are still necessary to settle the questions which were apparently decided forever at Appomattox Court House; and perhaps you feel dissatisfied that the country has not subsided into the peaceful quiet so earnestly desired by all good citizens. If so, you have erred, and still err, in regarding the rebellion as merely the movement of a few unquiet spirits, who made skilful use of slavery as the means by which to gratify the longings of personal ambition.

The rebellion was much more than this. It was the struggle between two opposite systems of society. On the one hand were the traditions of feudalism, of caste, of class privileges, the reaction against modern thought and liberty, which for three generations had moulded every institution, and had trained the people to one unvarying course of thought. On the other hand were the expansion of progress, belief in the dignity of labor, faith in the liberty of thought—in fine, the absolute right of every man to reason for himself and to carve out his own destiny. That systems so antagonistic should, sooner or later, measure their strength in deadly strife was inevitable.

Human slavery was the most prominent bulwark of the Southern system, and it naturally became the ostensible cause of struggle. Naturally, also, it perished in the war which it had provoked, because it was the most assailable and least defensible portion of the system. When we marked the downfall of that great iniquity, we shouted that

our work was done, for we had given too little thought to all that lay behind slavery, that had fostered it, and had been fostered by it. Nor had we yet sounded to its utmost depths the baseness of that faction, falsely styling itself Democratic, which, crazed with the lust of office, is ready to sell itself into bondage again to the masters whose rule had wrought such ruin to us all.

No, our work is not yet done, nor will it be done until Northern ideas shall have been penetrated throughout the South, and society there shall have reconstructed itself on the basis of true Democracy. When Abraham Lincoln said that the United States could not remain half slave and half free, he gave utterance only to a portion of a great truth. Our country must be homogeneous. One section of it cannot be aristocratic, nursing sedulously the exploded notions of class privileges, and persecuting men because they labor for their daily bread, or because they entertain ideas repugnant to the dominant caste; while the other section honors labor and the laborer, admits of no distinction between citizens, and grants the fullest toleration to every shade of opinion on every subject. One section cannot set up the State as the sovereign object of its allegiance, while the other admits of no rival to the Union in its claims upon the citizen. Yet now that slavery is legally dead, and secession has been nominally renounced, these differences between the North and the South exist as sharply as ever. Until they shall be removed, political strife must continue, as keen and eager as the strife lately hushed on the battle-field. The result must necessarily be that either Northern ideas must conquer the South, as Northern arms have already done, or that Southern ideas must accomplish what Southern arms so miserably failed in attempting.

Enclosed as we are between two oceans, occupiers forever of the same land, this is the struggle which is set before us. We cannot shirk it. We cannot shun the necessity which is upon us. We may seek in cowardly mood to shrink back from our appointed work, but we shall merely postpone the inevitable, and prolong the labor and the suffering. It is only by pressing forward, resolutely, but prudently and wisely, to do that which Providence has ordained us to do, that we can escape with the least amount of toil and loss.

The burden of this task which lies before us has been immeasurably increased by the selfish stolidity and short-sighted recklessness of the Democratic party. Even as in 1860-61 they invited their slaveholding allies into ruinous rebellion, so now, in the hope of a temporary restoration to power, they are sedulously urging those same allies to resist afresh the inevitable course of events. Forgetful of the fearful record of the past, wilfully disregarding the irresistible developments of the future, they seek only to pander to popular passion in the present, and rest their hopes of success solely on their skill to work upon the meanest motives and prejudices of their dupes.

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We would not judge them harshly, for they are our fellow-countrymen. That the masses of the party are, honestly wishing to do their duty we dare not doubt, but they have surrendered themselves to leaders who make sport of their honor, and sell them for the vilest price that ever freemen were bargained for. Who is there so hardened that his cheek did not tingle with shame when he learned that General Forrest of Tennessee, Forrest the negro-trader, Forrest the guerilla, Forrest the butcher of Fort Pillow, was a Democratic delegate to a National Convention assembled to frame a platform and to select candidates for whom men of the North are expected to vote? Yet abject as is this degradation, they succeeded in reaching a further depth, for this same Forrest was able to boast publicly on his return that four-fifths of the Northern Democrats whom he had met apologized to him for having opposed the South in her rebellion. When the Democratic party thus intrusts itself wholly to men who abjure their manhood, is it to be wondered at if they adopt a set of principles dictated to them by Wade Hampton, and present for your suffrages men who are pledged to undo as far as possible all that the war has accomplished, even at the cost of another war? Or can we be surprised that the South, finding such facile allies, should eagerly revert to its old ideas, and should strive to make those ideas permanently triumphant as the guiding principles of the Republic?

In this we do not blame the South, for Southern men have been educated in the beliefs to which they cling, and they, at least, are honest in their faith. That they are struggling for an obsolete theory of society is their misfortune, and while duty to the country and to millions yet unborn compels us to combat that theory as destructive to the well-being of us all, yet for the men who conscientiously uphold it we would personally entertain none but the kindest and most charitable feelings. It was the first act of the Government, after the surrender of Lee and Johnson, to feed the starving masses of the Southern people, and that much maligned institution, the Freedmen's Bureau, has consistently dispensed its bounty without regard to the loyalty of the recipients. We have always rejoiced in these facts, and it is our pride to think that in all the movements to relieve the wants of the South, without distinction of race, color, or political opinion, since the close of the war, the members of this League and of the party which it represents have ever been foremost with active sympathy and substantial aid. Yet, while we would gladly assuage the calamities which they have brought upon themselves, we cannot but resist them to the death in their mad attempt to bring back a forgotten past.

Whether they are to succeed in this will be determined at the November election. In asserting this we are not theorizing, for the proof lies within reach of every man who can note and weigh the events that are passing before his eyes. As in wine there is truth, so in the excitement and enthusiasm of the South at the surrender of the Democracy in New

York, the restraint of the last three years was swept away, and the gladness of anticipated triumph seemed to render caution and reticence no longer necessary. When Governor Wise, at the Richmond ratification meeting, assured his hearers that secession was as much alive as ever, he only crudely declared what Wade Hampton, the dictator of the Democratic platform, expressed more covertly at the Charleston meeting, in pledging his sword once more to his native State, and swearing that at her call he would hasten to her rescue from the uttermost bounds of the earth. Fresh from the meeting of the "National" Democracy, and planning a political campaign for the whole nation, he yet had no thought for the nation. His allegiance was confined to the petty borders of the sovereign State of South Carolina. No, secession is not yet dead, and the *Memphis Appeal* only gives form to the secret vows of the Southern Democrats when it bluntly declares that the South will yet be independent.

If secession is thus still rampant, the other old heresies are not less vigorous. The spirit of feudal oppression and class privilege, the contempt for honest labor and the determination to keep it in subjection, which formerly manifested themselves in slaveholding, were, when slavery was abolished, promptly reasserted in the black codes enacted throughout the South by Mr. Johnson's reconstructed legislatures. Now that these also have been swept away, the same spirit reveals itself in the schemes to control the negro vote and to render him the instrument of his own disfranchisement. Public speakers openly advise combined action to throw out of employment every man who does not vote the Democratic ticket, and associations are springing up everywhere pledged to carry out this policy in an organized manner. It is characteristic of the party that men styling themselves Democrats should manifest such utter contempt for the first element of republican democracy.

Nor is the old intolerance, which placed a padlock on the lips of every man who did not think with the majority, one whit abated. Free thought and free speech—the vital breath of our institutions—are as obnoxious to the Southern mind to-day as when peaceful citizens were tarred and feathered for disbelieving in the Divine appointment of chattel bondage. All who frankly accept the results of the war, all men, whether Northern or Southern, who honestly believe that the South can be readjusted to the necessities of the new era, are denounced as unfit for human companionship; they are to be placed under the ban, and exposed to ingenious persecution, until driven away in despair from a community which is obstinately determined to learn nothing and to forget nothing.

Still more portentous is the undiminished vigor of the old spirit of lawlessness—the spirit which taught that it was noble and chivalric to defy the law, and which ever sympathized with and protected the law-breaker. The peculiar boast of modern Anglo-Saxon civilization is the innate reverence for the sanctity of law which enables vast communities to live with perfect safety to person and property, and without subjec-

tion to the bayonet. It is this training which ranges every citizen instinctively against the law-breaker, and thus relieves us from the ruinous expense and demoralization of huge standing armies, and in this training the South is unfortunately more deficient than ever. Witness the hundred murders a month now occurring unpunished in Louisiana; witness the nine hundred and thirty-nine homicides which have been perpetrated in Texas since the rebellion was suppressed, and for which but one murderer has been hanged; witness the burning of negro schools and the lynching of negro teachers; witness the outrages of Ku Klux Klans, combining every element of grotesque ferocity. No one understood the power of this spirit better than General Blair, when, foreseeing that the South would control the Democratic Convention, he bid for its support by pledging himself to trample upon the laws of Congress, to coerce the Senate into submission, and to disperse by force the reconstructed governments of the Southern States. The artful bait was eagerly swallowed, and simultaneously every organ of Southern opinion appeals to force to carry the election, or to upset the election in case of defeat. Every disfranchised rebel is to vote, and if these illegal votes are refused, the bayonet is invoked to compel their reception. Virginia is to vote, and Texas, and Mississippi, States not yet organized or recognized, and Congress is to be overawed into counting their ballots in the Electoral College; while, if these hopeful schemes fail in winning success for their revolutionary candidates, civil war is freely threatened as a last resort.

We have no fears that this antiquated system of lawlessness, of oppression, of aristocracy, and of secession, can win an ultimate and permanent victory, for the spirit of the age is against it, and sooner or later it must go down and be buried with the kindred relics of now forgotten wrong and error. Neither can we promise you that the success of the Republican party at the coming elections will at once elevate the South from darkness into light. We only know that, as sure as there is a God in heaven, progress and enlightenment and freedom must triumph in the end. It rests with you to say whether this triumph shall be speedy and peaceful, or whether the struggle shall be prolonged and arduous, leading to convulsions as fierce as those from which we have just emerged. The alliance between the Democracy and reaction is so thorough and cordial that the nomination of Seymour and Blair is everywhere hailed at the South as the justification of the rebellion, and the bitterest rebels openly declare that in striving for the success of their candidates they are but continuing the battle for the lost cause—that they are fighting now for what they fought for from 1861 to 1865. Should they by any possibility of force or fraud carry the day, think what a dreary vista of anarchy and strife we shall have to traverse ere we can restore the country to even the measure of peace which we now enjoy! Exhausted as we are, and needing years of quiet industry to make good the losses and the ravages of war, four years of Democratic

misrule, under the guidance of Wade Hampton and Blair, would do more for our prostration than was effected by the four years of the rebellion.

Nor can we flatter ourselves that the cautious selfishness of an intriguing politician like Seymour would arrest the madness of those to whom he would owe his election. They would be his masters, for in times like those which would be upon us, negative natures must succumb to positive ones. We should see our destinies intrusted to such men as Wade Hampton in the War Department, and Raphael Semmes at the head of our Navy. Should Seymour falter in the work, he would be made to feel that his safety depended upon his obedience, and if this were not sufficient, the men who are already invoking the dagger of Brutus and the shade of Wilkes Booth would not scruple to remove him that they might obtain the services of the reckless and unprincipled Blair.

Whichever way we turn, fellow-citizens, we therefore see that our only hope of safety lies in electing Grant by such a majority as may show to Democrats and rebels that the American people intend to persevere in the path which they have entered; that neither threats nor blandishments will turn them from their duty, and that they are irrevocably determined that the causes which led to the rebellion shall be forever removed from the nation.

These are the main issues awaiting your decision, but scarcely second to them in their influence on the well-being of the people are the questions connected with our national finances. Simple as the solution of these questions may be to common-sense honesty, it is in the power of demagogues so to complicate them, by tampering with the national credit, as to inflict incalculable injury on all the industrial and financial interests of the country. It is not on the bondholder that the chief loss would be inflicted, for the Government credit is so inextricably intertwined in every transaction of daily life that every man is a creditor of the Government. The poorest citizen, who has nothing but his labor to sell, can receive in exchange for his labor nothing but tokens of Government credit, and his all is dependent upon its maintenance. Moreover, the ruin of that credit would necessarily thus bring about a paralysis ruinous alike to the farmer and the mechanic, the merchant and the workingman; and, while all would suffer, that suffering would fall with peculiar hardship upon the industrious poor whose daily labor is their only provision against want and starvation.

Had it not been for the assaults already made upon the national credit, the problem would already be near its solution, for all that is required is a rigid adherence to plighted faith. Let the world once believe that our promises to pay will be honored without reservation or equivocation, and those promises will speedily become equivalent to gold in the markets of the world; and when once that point is reached, the questions which now rack the brains of political financiers disappear of themselves. Fortunately the utterances of the Chicago platform on this

point are so clear and unmistakable that the indorsement of that platform by the people will at once smooth our path towards resumption of specie payments and the lightening of the public burdens; while the dubious and threatening phrases of the Democratic profession of faith would render its triumph the source of the most disastrous complications. Strange that the hard-money Democracy of Jackson and Benton and Van Buren, should now be conspiring to inflict upon us the unimaginable miseries of countless billions of hopelessly irredeemable paper!

Such, fellow-citizens, are the mighty issues which you are now called upon to decide. As your votes are cast, so will be the future of our country. With Grant you may enjoy peace, prosperity and progress; with Seymour you can scarce hope to escape anarchy, desolation and long years of bitterest strife.

PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS.

WHEREAS, The policy proclaimed by the so-called Democratic party, in its platform and in the utterances of its candidates and representative leaders, is such as justly to create the profoundest alarm as to the future of our country; and

WHEREAS, In the perils to which are thus exposed all the great principles which this League was founded to support, it is proper that we should express our sense of the issues which are to be decided at the coming elections, and that we should use all honorable means to avert the dangers inseparable from a Democratic victory at the polls; therefore,

Resolved—

I. That we see with the deepest sorrow the peace, won through the sacrifices of four years of war, imperilled by the action of reckless demagogues who are industriously laboring to rekindle the embers of rebellion.

II. That as the Democratic party now seeks to reopen the questions which were settled by the war and by the legislation consequent thereon, the endless strife with which they threaten us can only be avoided by the emphatic condemnation at the ballot-box of the lawless and revolutionary programme, for which they have the effrontery to ask the favor of the people.



III. That in view of the open alliance now acknowledged between the Democracy and the Rebellion, it is the first duty of every citizen to spare no exertion to defeat that faction, which sought in 1864 to force upon us a treasonable peace, and which now endeavors to destroy our glorious peace by threatening a treasonable war, consistent in nothing but the insane desire to foster and protect treason and rebellion.

IV. That we confidently look to the gallant men, who stood by the flag during long years of desperate war, for efficient aid in our efforts to defeat a platform dictated by the rebels whom they had conquered, and to prevent the success of candidates who pledge themselves to undo, in the cabinet, all that has been accomplished in the field.

V. That we echo the words of our great leader, "Let us have peace," as the expression of the end and aim of our political action, and that in no way can the blessings of a durable pacification be attained except by the triumphant election of him who was first in war, and whom we are resolved to make first in peace.

VI. That the financial policy developed in the Chicago platform meets our warmest approbation; that we denounce, with it, as a national crime, all the forms of repudiation, open or disguised, suggested by the Democratic Convention; that we believe "the best policy to diminish our burden of debt is to improve our credit," so that a specie currency may be insensibly restored by the appreciation of the national securities; and that the demagogues who are insidiously assailing the credit of the Government are the greatest enemies of the people whom they are seeking to cajole.

VII. That the thanks of our citizens are due to our Representatives in Congress who have so gallantly resisted the encroachments of the Executive, and have, in the face of apparently insuperable obstacles, wrought out a practicable plan of reconstruction, based upon the immutable principles of the rights of man.

VIII. That in the unexceptionable tickets, National, State, and Municipal, presented for the suffrages of the Republican party, we see an assured guarantee of our triumphant success, provided we do not throw away our advantages through supineness and over-confidence.

IX. That we would especially warn our friends to be vigilant and determined to prevent a repetition of the enormous and bare-faced frauds by which the Democratic party last year gained an apparent victory in our city and State.

X. That a committee of fifty members of the League be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting, to give effect to the views expressed in the second of the above resolutions, and that the said committee have power to fill vacancies and to add to its number.

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